

Neil Armstrong (August 5, 1930 – August 25, 2012) was an American [astronaut](#) and [aeronautical engineer](#) who in 1969 became the [first person to walk on the Moon](#). He was also a [naval aviator](#), [test pilot](#), and [university professor](#).

Armstrong was born and raised in [Wapakoneta, Ohio](#). He entered [Purdue University](#), studying [aeronautical engineering](#), with the U.S. Navy paying his tuition under the [Holloway Plan](#). He became a [midshipman](#) in 1949 and a [naval aviator](#) the following year. He saw action in the [Korean War](#), flying the [Grumman F9F Panther](#) from the [aircraft carrier USS Essex](#). After the war, he completed his bachelor's degree at Purdue and became a test pilot at the [National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics \(NACA\) High-Speed Flight Station](#) at [Edwards Air Force Base](#) in California. He was the project pilot on [Century Series](#) fighters and flew the [North American X-15](#) seven times. He was also a participant in the U.S. Air Force's [Man in Space Soonest](#) and [X-20 Dyna-Soar](#) human spaceflight programs.

Armstrong joined the [NASA Astronaut Corps](#) in the [second group](#), which was selected in 1962. He made his first [spaceflight](#) as command pilot of [Gemini 8](#) in March 1966, becoming NASA's first civilian astronaut to fly in space. During this mission with pilot [David Scott](#), he performed the first [docking](#) of two [spacecraft](#); the mission was aborted after Armstrong used some of his re-entry control fuel to stabilize a dangerous roll caused by a stuck thruster. During training for Armstrong's second and last spaceflight as commander of [Apollo 11](#), he had to eject from the [Lunar Landing Research Vehicle](#) moments before a crash.

On July 20, 1969, Armstrong and Apollo 11 [Lunar Module \(LM\)](#) pilot [Buzz Aldrin](#) became the first people to [land on the Moon](#), and the next day they spent two and a half hours outside the [Lunar Module Eagle](#) spacecraft while [Michael Collins](#) remained in lunar orbit in the [Apollo Command Module Columbia](#). When Armstrong first stepped onto the lunar surface, he famously said: "That's one small step for [a] man, one giant leap for mankind."<sup>[1][2][3][4]</sup> It was broadcast live to an estimated 530 million viewers worldwide.

Apollo 11 was a major U.S. victory in the [Space Race](#), by fulfilling a national goal

# Heading